



MAINTAINING
THE
Mission
Mindset

USING *LECTIO DIVINA* TO KEEP
YOUR MEETINGS FOCUSED
ON CHRIST AND HIS MISSION

Why Lectio Divina?

"If [Lectio Divina] is effectively promoted, this practice will bring to the Church - I am convinced of it - a new spiritual springtime."

~Pope Benedict XVI, Address, September 16, 2005

As we work to create a culture of missionary discipleship in our local Church, consider making a commitment to begin all meetings with a short period of *Lectio Divina*.

Here are some reasons why this model of prayer can be particularly effective:

- *Lectio Divina* is an encounter with the living Word of God who approaches us and changes our hearts.
- *Lectio Divina*, done slowly and intentionally, will set the tone for the entire meeting, softening hearts, quieting interior noise and turning everyone's gaze to God as the source and center of what is being discussed at the meeting.
- *Lectio Divina* allows each person to hear God speaking to him/her personally, which is an experience that lies at the heart of missionary discipleship.
- *Lectio Divina* is flexible enough to be done in as a little 5 minutes or to make up the content of an entire meeting.

The suggested Scriptures that follow are selected specifically to keep the call of missionary discipleship at the forefront of everyone's minds. There are passages related to discipleship - one's personal friendship with Jesus - followed by passages for reflection on our mission with Christ to seek and save souls.

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THE STEPS OF LECTIO DIVINA

Lectio Divina, or "Divine Reading," refers specifically to an approach to prayer and scripture reading practiced by monastics since the early Church. The idea of praying with sacred scripture comes to the Church through ancient Jewish tradition. Christians in the early Church continued this tradition and further developed the practice of prayer and meditation using mostly the psalms as a rich source of heartfelt engagement with God. This development is evident in early Church History in the 48th chapter of the Rule of St. Benedict (A.D. 480-453).

Open your time of prayer by invoking the Holy Spirit. You can do this using your own words or you can pray the traditional prayer, *Come, Holy Spirit*:

"Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created, and you shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who, by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy his consolations. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen."

1. LECTIO (READING)

An attentive, slow, repetitious recitation of a short passage of Scripture

In this first step, slowly read the selected Scripture passage. Allow the words to wash over you. In the silence that follows, take note of a word or phrase that particularly stood out to you. You may want to write it down or underline it.

2. MEDITATIO (MEDITATION)

An effort to understand God's Word and apply it to my own life

Read the passage slowly again. Focus your attention on the word or phrase that stood out to you. In the silence that follows, ask God what he wants to say to you through this word or phrase. Reflect on any insights that come. You may want to write down your thoughts.

3. ORATIO (PRAYER)

Engaging or talking with God about the passage

Read the passage slowly once again. In the silence that follows, write your own prayer to the Father in response to what He has been saying to you during your prayer time.

4. CONTEMPLATIO (CONTEMPLATION)

Resting in God

Read the passage slowly one final time. In the silence that follows, simply rest quietly in the love God has for you and any insights or graces received during your prayer time.

You may want to end your Lectio Divina with your own prayer of praise and thanksgiving or a Glory Be.

LEADING OTHERS IN LECTIO DIVINA

Open your time of prayer by invoking the Holy Spirit. You can do this using your own words or you can pray the traditional prayer, *Come, Holy Spirit*:

“Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created, and you shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who, by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy his consolations. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.”

STEP 1: LECTIO

Say: “Lectio: In this first step, as I read the Scripture passage, allow the words to wash over you. In the silence that follows, take note of a word or phrase that particularly stood out to you. You may want to write it down or underline it.”

[Read the passage aloud slowly,
then pause in silence for 1 minute]

STEP 2: MEDITATIO

Say: “Meditatio: As I read the passage again, focus your attention on the word or phrase that stood out to you. In the silence that follows, ask God what he wants to say to you through this word or phrase. Reflect on any insights that come. You may want to write down your thoughts.”

[Read the passage aloud slowly,
then pause in silence for 2 minutes]

STEP 3: ORATIO

Say: “Oratio: In the next couple of minutes of silence, make your own personal response to the Father in light of what He has been saying to you.”

[Pause in silence for 2 minutes]

STEP 4: CONTEMPLATIO

Say: “Contemplatio: In these final moments of silence, simply rest in the love that God has for you and in the insights or graces received during this time of prayer.”

[Pause in silence for 2 minutes]

End the time of Lectio Divina by leading the group in a Glory Be.

This format is timed for about 10 minutes. Feel free to adjust the times of silence as needed to shorten or lengthen the prayer. If time permits, you may also wish invite the group to share aloud the word/phrase that stood out to them and the insights they received from the Lord.

SCRIPTURES FOR DISCIPLESHIP

Mark 1:9-11 – You are my beloved Son

It happened in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John. On coming up out of the water he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

Matthew 16:13-17 – Who do you say that I am?

When Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist,* others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter said in reply, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” Jesus said to him in reply, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father.

John 15:4-8 – I am the Vine

“Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.”

John 4:10-15 – I will give you living water

Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.” [The woman] said to him, “Sir, you do not even have a bucket and the well is deep; where then can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this well and drank from it himself with his children and his flocks?” Jesus answered and said to her, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

John 1:35-39 – Come and see

The next day John was there again with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said, “Behold, the Lamb of God.” The two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, “What are you looking for?” They said to him, “Rabbi” (which translated means Teacher), “where are you staying?” He said to them, “Come, and you will see.” So they went and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon.

Philippians 3:8 – I consider everything as a loss

More than that, I even consider everything as a loss because of the supreme good of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have accepted the loss of all things and I consider them so much rubbish, that I may gain Christ...

John 10:9-15 – I know mine and mine know me

I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy; I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. A hired man, who is not a shepherd and whose sheep are not his own, sees a wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away, and the wolf catches and scatters them. This is because he works for pay and has no concern for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I will lay down my life for the sheep.

John 14:18-13 – My Father will love him and we will make our dwelling with him

I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me, because I live and you will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me. And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him.” Judas, not the Iscariot, said to him, “Master, [then] what happened that you will reveal yourself to us and not to the world?” Jesus answered and said to him, “Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him.

Matthew 11:28-30 – Come to me, all who labor and are burdened

“Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.”

John 15:15-16 – I call you friends

I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father. It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you.

Isaiah 43:1-4 – You are precious in my eyes and glorious

But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, Jacob, and formed you, Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name: you are mine. When you pass through waters, I will be with you; through rivers, you shall not be swept away. When you walk through fire, you shall not be burned, nor will flames consume you. For I, the LORD, am your God, the Holy One of Israel, your savior. I give Egypt as ransom for you, Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you. Because you are precious in my eyes and honored, and I love you.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 – My grace is sufficient for you

Therefore, that I might not become too elated, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, an angel of Satan, to beat me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I begged the Lord about this, that it might leave me, but he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” I will rather boast most gladly of my weaknesses, in order that the power of Christ may dwell with me. Therefore, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and constraints, for the sake of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

Isaiah 54:10 – My love shall never fall away from you

Though the mountains fall away and the hills be shaken, My love shall never fall away from you nor my covenant of peace be shaken, says the LORD, who has mercy on you.

SCRIPTURES FOR MISSION

Matthew 28:16-20 – Go, make disciples

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

Mark 1:16-18 – Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

As he passed by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea; they were fishermen. Jesus said to them, “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Then they abandoned their nets and followed him.

Luke 15:1-7 – Parable of the Lost Sheep

The tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to listen to him, but the Pharisees and scribes began to complain, saying, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.” So to them he addressed this parable. “What man among you having a hundred sheep and losing one of them would not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the lost one until he finds it? And when he does find it, he sets it on his shoulders with great joy and, upon his arrival home, he calls together his friends and neighbors and says to them, ‘Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.’ I tell you, in just the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance.

1 John 1:1-4 – What we have received, we proclaim now to you

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we looked upon and touched with our hands concerns the Word of life—for the life was made visible; we have seen it and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was made visible to us—what we have seen and heard we proclaim now to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; for our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We are writing this so that our joy may be complete.

1 Corinthians 9:16 – Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel

If I preach the gospel, this is no reason for me to boast, for an obligation has been imposed on me, and woe to me if I do not preach it!

John 17:14-19 – Jesus prays for the Church

I gave them your word, and the world hated them, because they do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world but that you keep them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world. Consecrate them in the truth. Your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I sent them into the world. And I consecrate myself for them, so that they also may be consecrated in truth.

Romans 10:14-15 – How beautiful are the feet of those who bring the good news

But how can they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone to preach? And how can people preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring [the] good news!”

2 Cor 5:16-20 – Ambassadors for Christ

“...from now on we regard no one according to the flesh; even if we once knew Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know him so no longer. So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come. And all this is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were appealing through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”

John 20:19-23 – As the Father has sent me, so I send you

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace be with you.” When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. [Jesus] said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.”

2 Timothy 4:1-5 – Proclaim the word whether it is convenient or inconvenient

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingly power: proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching. For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine but, following their own desires and insatiable curiosity, will accumulate teachers and will stop listening to the truth and will be diverted to myths. But you, be self-possessed in all circumstances; put up with hardship; perform the work of an evangelist; fulfill your ministry.

Matthew 9:35-38 – The harvest is plentiful, the laborers are few

Jesus went around to all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and curing every disease and illness. At the sight of the crowds, his heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest.”

1 Corinthians 9:19-13 – I have become all things to all men

Although I am free in regard to all, I have made myself a slave to all so as to win over as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew to win over Jews; to those under the law I became like one under the law—though I myself am not under the law—to win over those under the law. To those outside the law I became like one outside the law—though I am not outside God’s law but within the law of Christ—to win over those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, to win over the weak. I have become all things to all, to save at least some. All this I do for the sake of the gospel, so that I too may have a share in it.

1 Thessalonians 2:8-12 – We were determined to share our very selves with you

With such affection for you, we were determined to share with you not only the gospel of God, but our very selves as well, so dearly beloved had you become to us. You recall, brothers, our toil and drudgery. Working night and day in order not to burden any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers. As you know, we treated each one of you as a father treats his children, exhorting and encouraging you and insisting that you conduct yourselves as worthy of the God who calls you into his kingdom and glory.